

PERSPECTIVES

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Upcoming Meetings:

February 19:
Bd. of Bldg. Code Appeals, 10:00 a.m.

February 20:
Board of Zoning Appeals, 10:00 a.m.

February 24:
Design Review Committee, 4:00 p.m.

February 27:
City Planning Commission, 1:00 p.m.
Public Hearing, 2:30

March 10:
Design Review Committee, 4:00 p.m.

March 12:
Wetlands Board 2:00 p.m.

March 13:
City Planning Commission, 12:00 p.m.

March 19:
Bd. of Bldg. Code Appeals, 10:00 a.m.

March 20:
Board of Zoning Appeals, 10:00 a.m.



HOME RENOVATION FAIR FOR THE BROAD CREEK NEIGHBORHOOD

Over 60 participants braved the colder than usual temperatures to take part in the Home Renovation Fair for the Broad Creek Neighborhood, held January 25, 2003. Volunteers from the neighborhood welcomed each visitor with a warm smile and a packet of information, before directing them upstairs. The Fair was held on the 3rd floor of the Norfolk Community Hospital Building in rooms made available by Empowerment 2010, Inc.



Sponsored by the City of Norfolk, the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority, and the Broad Creek Civic League, the Fair was a collaborative effort that focused on helping residents to acquire information and available resources to improve their homes. The Renovation Fair for the Broad Creek Community served as a pilot program and a component of the "Come Home to Norfolk, Now" campaign. The success and lessons learned from this first ever neighborhood-based home renovation fair will set the tone for future renovation fairs to be held throughout the City and in various neighborhoods.

The fair presented homeowners with a host of public and private sector program options related to the home renovation process. Examples of public sector programs showcased include the Equity Secure Program, the Tax Abatement Program, and Real Estate Tax Relief for Disabled or Senior Citizens. Private sector programs include the 203(k) Rehabilitation Program, Title I, Equity Loans, and second mortgages. The overarching goal of this event was to educate and inform residents with the end result being home and neighborhood enhancement.

Participating vendors included Sun Trust, Wells Fargo, First Horizon, Southern Trust, Resource Mortgage, and the Virginia Housing and Development Authority. Residents took advantage of the opportunity to browse around booths and to interact one-on-one with vendors. One-stop shopping for home mortgage and renovation information was made available in VHDA's mobile office (a converted RV which made the trip from Richmond). Refreshments were also provided.

Along with these exhibitors, two successive workshops were offered. Each workshop covered important "how-to" information concerning the home improvement process. "The Renovation Process" was facilitated by Kim S. Curtis, Executive VP of Southern Trust. Janice G. Burgess, manager of the Single Family Loan Program at VHDA, talked with residents about "How to Find Financing." During each seminar other vendors were encouraged to attend and assist in answering questions.

The success of this first ever Home Renovation Fair can be contributed to the strong partnership between the City and the Broad Creek Community. Residents were involved in the conception of the idea, distributing flyers, welcoming citizens, as well as setting up and cleaning up after the event. The success of the Fair and the successful partnership between the City and the Broad Creek Neighborhood ultimately sets the benchmark for future Renovation Fairs and other City-community endeavors.

Emily Gupton - Planner I



WE'RE ON THE WEB

www.norfolk.gov/planning/

Highlights of our web page include:

- ◆ Meeting schedules & agendas for boards & commissions
- ◆ Staff reports & maps for Planning Commission public hearing items
- ◆ General department information and contacts
- ◆ Links to the Zoning Ordinance
- ◆ Demographic & Land Use information
- ◆ Answers to frequently asked questions (such as how to rezone a property)

We are constantly updating our web page - please come back often.

Light Rail Public Hearing

The required formal public hearings under federal law on the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) for the proposed Norfolk light rail system were conducted on January 29 and 30, 2003. The SDEIS document analyzes the environmental and transportation impacts of a proposed Norfolk light rail transit system which runs from a western terminus near the Medical Center Complex through Downtown Norfolk to an eastern terminus on Kempsville Road just north of I-264. The proposed project consists of an 8-mile light rail transit line entirely within the City of Norfolk that includes 11 stations, a light rail vehicle storage and maintenance facility near Norfolk State University, an expanded bus feeder system, and provisions for parking at three of the proposed station sites.

Attendance at the two public hearings totaled approximately 150 individuals, and 45 speakers provided comments on the proposed light rail project. Most statements centered on potential impacts of the project at selected station areas. The next step for the rail program will include the detailed review of the light rail public hearing record which stays open until early March when it is finalized and forwarded. Then, work to accommodate and address the stated concerns from interested and affected parties to the maximum extent feasible will be advanced. It is hoped that the environmental reviews for the light rail project can be completed by the middle of the year which will permit federal authorities to issue a formal Record of Decision (ROD) in support of the proposed project at that time. The concurrent light rail preliminary engineering program will also continue throughout the remainder of the year.

Jeff Raliski-Transportation Manager

Colonial Place/Riverview Charrette

There were 175 participants in the Colonial Place/Riverview Community Charrette on Saturday February 1st, 2003 held at the Stuart Gifted Center. The charrette was a neighborhood event: planned, organized and lead completely by neighborhood volunteers. The purpose of the charrette was to engage the Colonial Place/Riverview community to create a vision for the future, in which all stakeholders were represented. Neighborhood residents, business owners and high school students, as well as neighboring community representatives, realtors, City Department heads, and other city staff were all in attendance. Neighboring restaurants and businesses were included as well, providing breakfast and lunch for the participants, and door prizes, which were distributed throughout the event.

Dr. Norman Pollock, a professor and former resident of Colonial Place, provided a brief history of the area. David Block and Officer Jim Prentice, discussed the current state of the neighborhoods.

The main event included 3 breakout sessions in which participants could choose one of eight group discussions: public safety, schools, land use, transportation, business districts, city services, community activities and anything goes. Each facilitators presented a summary of key issues and recommendations. Recommendations included:

- Offering a mentoring and/or internship program in the schools;
- Increasing access to, and enhancing public spaces, specifically along the water;
- Creating a park, and pedestrian trails at the Lafayette Motor Hotel site;
- Studying the traffic patterns in the neighborhood and evaluating for possible conversion to one way streets;
- Organizing a group whose purpose will be to actively recruit businesses desired by the neighborhood;
- Putting all of the overhead utility wires underground;
- Create strategies to preserve architectural integrity;
- Holding a charrette for the high schools; and,
- Developing a walking tour for the neighborhood.

The results will be compiled by the community and the information will be distributed to the community, City staff, NRHA, and other entities. This was an excellent example of how communities, with the skills and capacity necessary, can take the lead and responsibility for planning the future of their neighborhoods.

Jennifer Moreau - Neighborhood Planner